

The Lincolns In
Their Old Kentucky Home

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THE LINCOLNS IN THEIR OLD KENTUCKY HOME

Kentucky is the mother of many noted men. Some of them remained within the state and made it yet more illustrious, while others born within it migrated to new commonwealths and helped to make them famous. Foremost of those who were born in Kentucky and spent their manhood elsewhere was Abraham Lincoln. The migration of the Lincoln family from Massachusetts westward and southwestward through New Jersey and Pennsylvania into Virginia, and thence westward through Cumberland Gap into Kentucky and thence northwestward on into the still newer Indiana and Illinois, is fairly typical among American migrations. The Lincoln family did not remain in Kentucky, but for more than a third of a century, from 1780 until 1816, Kentucky was the home of the Lincolns, and here the great president was born. Within that period the family resided in three different counties, and a closely related branch was in still another county. These localities have not hitherto been examined with adequate care by historians, and there is a considerable degree of confusion and of incorrect statement in even the most carefully written biographies of Abraham Lincoln. It is my purpose to correct a number of mistakes, to eliminate some elements of confusion, and to make a contribution to knowledge of the Kentucky habitat of the Lincoln family.

If all records had been preserved and properly indexed in the several Kentucky counties where the Lincolns resided, our task would be easier, and some of our judgments more certain, but we know enough to be reasonably certain in our conclusions.

The Lincoln family was not rich in tradition. Certain authors have based their more or less reliable affirmations on "traditions of the Lincoln family"; but these usually have been cited as affording some basis for affirmations of their own. There are not many traditions which originated in the Lincoln family. Very nearly all the traditions which we have are those which were preserved by Abraham Lincoln himself, and these are few.

When in 1842 Abraham Lincoln married Mary Todd, he invited only one relative to his wedding, and that was John Hanks, who had split rails with him. No one by the name of Lincoln

was present excepting Abraham Lincoln himself. When Abraham Lincoln died, relatives of his wife were present at the funeral, though most of the Todds had been in the Confederate Army; there was no Lincoln present excepting the widow of Abraham Lincoln and her two sons.

This isolation of Abraham Lincoln from his own family is nothing less than pathetic, but it is easily accounted for. Thomas Lincoln, father of Abraham, was left an orphan at an early age, and became, as his son Abraham stated it, "a wandering laboring boy." When Thomas Lincoln married Nancy Hanks, he removed from Washington County, where his older brothers lived, and a few years later he removed from the state, taking with him the future president, then a little lad of seven. Members of the Hanks family accompanied the youthful Abraham Lincoln to Indiana, and later to Illinois, but he lost all touch with the Lincolns. Even after Abraham became famous, his relatives on his father's side did not come into intimate relations with him. His biographers, Nicolay and Hay, say:

"Even the great fame and conspicuousness of the President did not tempt them out of their retirement. . . . Robert Lincoln, of Hancock County, Illinois, a cousin-german, became a captain and commissary of volunteers; none of the others, so far as we know, ever made their existence known to their powerful kinsman during the years of his glory."—Abraham Lincoln, a History, i: pp. 3, 4.

In 1859 Abraham Lincoln furnished to Jesse W. Fell a short sketch of his life and antecedents, in which he said:

"My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham county, Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1781 or 2, where, a year or two later, he was killed by Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest."

In the following year, 1860, Mr. Lincoln, then a nominee for the presidency, wrote a more elaborate sketch for John Locke Scripps, who prepared a biography of Lincoln for campaign purposes. This sketch, the original of which is preserved in the Library of Congress, says:

"Abraham removed to Kentucky about the year 1780, and four years thereafter, while engaged in opening a farm, he was surprised and killed by Indians, leaving a widow, three sons, and two daughters."

The names of the three sons were Mordecai, Josiah and Thomas. The third and youngest was the father of the President.

It will be noted that in the second and more careful document, President Lincoln placed his grandfather's migration into Kentucky earlier and his death later than in the first sketch. It may

be added that this later information given by President Lincoln is more nearly correct than the first. The date which he gives for his grandfather's arrival in Kentucky, 1780, is correct. The date assigned for the death of the pioneer, 1784, is still too early.

Abraham Lincoln, the pioneer, sold for five thousand pounds of the current money of Virginia, a sum worth not more than one hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling, his farm of 240 acres in Rockingham County, Virginia. On March 4, 1780, there were issued to Abraham Lincoln or Linkhorn, three land warrants, Nos. 3333, 3334 and 3335, for 400 acres each. The first and third of these warrants were used in the locating of a tract of 800 acres near Green River Lick, and the tract was duly surveyed. So far as we are aware, there is no claim on the part of anyone that Abraham Lincoln ever lived upon this land. Concerning the warrant 3334 we shall have more to say presently.

Sometime in the year 1783, as set forth in a suit of Mordecai Lincoln in June, 1816, against the heirs of John Reed, Abraham Lincoln procured a land warrant numbered 14427, by which warrant said Lincoln was entitled to 2268½ acres of land. This land was located on Bear Creek, running down Green River. It was agreed between Abraham Lincoln and John Reed that Reed should receive half the land for surveying and locating it, and the contention of Mordecai was that Reed fraudulently converted it all to his own use, forging the endorsement of Abraham to the assignment. With this large tract of land we have no concern, since there is no claim that the Lincolns ever occupied it.

The farm on which the Lincoln family lived in Washington County during the closing years of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth has been identified; and it is believed in that county that the older Abraham Lincoln lived and was killed there; this land was originally patented by Matthew Walton, and there is no record that it ever stood in the name of Abraham Lincoln.

I. THE JEFFERSON COUNTY HOME ON LONG RUN.

This brings us back to the year 1780, and to the Land Warrant issued March 4 in that year to "Abraham Linkhorn," and numbered 3334. It called for 400 acres of land to be located in any county of Virginia, the consideration being one hundred and sixty pounds. The original warrant is in the Durrett Collection in the Library of the University of Chicago.

On May 7, 1785, William Shannon, assistant surveyor, with William May as his assistant, surveyed for "Abraham Linkhorn," a tract of land, the same being patented by authority of Treasury Warrant 3334. The land was described as located on Long Run of Floyd's Fork, beginning at a corner two miles up the stream from the mouth of a tributary, indistinctly written, but which appears to have been intended as Tice's Creek, and may probably have been earlier known as Trace Creek, or Boone's Trace.

Abraham Lincoln was alive and assisted as marker in this survey of May 7, 1785,, and died sometime between that date and October 8, 1788, the date of administration of his estate. In fact, as we shall presently learn, we now know the date of his death to have been in the month of May, 1786.

Abraham Lincoln died intestate. His estate was administered in Nelson County. This is what we should expect if he had died in what is now Washington County, which was a part of Nelson until 1792. Had his family continued to reside on Long Run we should expect that administration would have been in Jefferson County. There would appear to be little if any doubt that by the time the estate was presented in court for settlement, the family was resident in what is now Washington, which was then a part of Nelson County. John Caldwell was appointed administrator. He submitted an inventory of personal property, March 10, 1789. This inventory is on file in Bardstown. No mention is made of real estate, nor is it stated where the deceased died.

Where did the pioneer Abraham Lincoln meet his death?

The Honorable J. L. Nall, of Missouri, grandson of Nancy Lincoln Brumfield, youngest child of the pioneer Abraham Lincoln, stated positively that he had from both his mother and his grandmother, a statement that Abraham Lincoln was killed near the Bear Grass Fort, and in what is now the very center of Louisville. Testimony like this should be entitled to great weight; but Mr. Nall was incorrect in many, if not most, of his traditions; and this one we cannot accept. Louisville in 1786 was already something of a city; and the circumstances of the death of the pioneer Abraham Lincoln are such as completely to deny this location.

We may now consider in its enlarged form the story of the death of Abraham Lincoln's grandfather as he himself transmitted it. It comes to us through his law partner, William H. Herndon:

"His paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, met his death within two

years after his settlement in Kentucky, at the hands of the Indians; 'not in battle,' as his distinguished grandson tells us, 'but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest.' The story of his death in sight of his youngest son, Thomas, then only six years old, is by no means a new one to the world. In fact, I have often heard the President describe the tragedy as he had inherited the story from his father. The dead pioneer had three sons, Mordecai, Josiah and Thomas, in the order named. When the father fell, Mordecai, having hastily sent Josiah to the neighboring fort for assistance, ran into the cabin, and pointing his rifle through a crack between the logs, prepared for defense. Presently an Indian came stealing up to the dead father's body. Beside the latter sat the little boy Thomas. Mordecai took deliberate aim at a silver crescent suspended from the Indian's breast, and brought him to the ground. Josiah returned from the fort with the desired relief, and the savages were easily dispersed, leaving behind them one dead and one wounded."—Herndon's *Lincoln*, first edition, i:pp. 9, 10.

When and where did this tragedy occur?

What is probably our earliest answer to this question is found in three different biographies of Lincoln, written in 1865. Hon. Joseph H. Barrett, Commissioner of Pensions, sent to Kentucky an artist named John H. Rowbotham, who was the first investigator to enter the backwoods of Kentucky and Indiana in search of authentic Lincoln material. Barrett says:

"According to the family tradition, it was somewhere on Floyd's Fork, supposed to be near its mouth, in what is now Bullitt County" (p. 14).

Barrett also affirms, and is as I suppose the first to affirm in print, that the widow of Abraham soon removed to Washington County (p. 15).

Dr. Brockett, who also wrote in 1865, says that the pioneer Abraham Lincoln:

"Established a home for his small family somewhere on Floyd's Creek, and probably near its mouth, in what is now Bullitt County" (p. 30).

Dr. Holland, writing in 1865, and after a visit to Herndon, says:

"The spot upon which he built is not known, though it is believed to have been somewhere on Floyd's Creek, in what is now Bullitt County" (pp. 19, 20).

This three-fold tradition is really a single tradition, and probably goes back to Barrett, and perhaps to Rowbotham. The conjecture that the site of the farm was in Bullitt County need not disturb us. Floyd's Fork lower down flows through Bullitt County, and county lines were not only somewhat vague, but some of them changed their direction as new counties were formed. The important fact about this earliest recorded tradition is this affirmation that Abraham Lincoln was killed on Floyd's Fork, and that his widow subsequently moved to Washington County.

Two additional authorities are all that we need to cite. Ward Hill Lamon, writing in 1871, and using the Herndon manuscripts, says:

"Immediately after the death of her husband, the widow abandoned the scenes of his misfortune and removed to Washington County, near the town of Springfield, where she lived until the youngest of her children had grown up" (p. 8).

He also states that the original home of the Lincolns had been in Mercer County. In this I think he is clearly wrong. I have had occasion to investigate the Mercer County records. Lamon appears to have confused the Lincolns with the Sparrows and some of the Hankses, who had their homes in Mercer. Herndon also clearly had the impression that the death of the pioneer occurred in Jefferson County (i: 10).

Nicolay and Hay deny the Mercer County residence (i: 11, note), but state that the pioneer Lincoln had settled in Jefferson County (i: 21) and that after his death, "the head of the family being gone, the widow Lincoln soon removed to a more thickly settled neighborhood in Washington County. There her children grew up" (i: 23).

These are all the traditions which bear upon the problem, excepting the Nall tradition, which locates the death of Abraham Lincoln within the corporate limits of Louisville, and which is not entitled to any credence, and the Washington County tradition, which has strong local support and consistency, but lacks additional corroboration.

With regard to the Washington County tradition, we encounter this additional difficulty, that so far as we know there was no fort or stockade in such close proximity to the Lincoln farm as to have afforded shelter for the family, and to which Josiah could have run for assistance. Rather singularly, the regions nearest to the Ohio River were open to attack from the Indians after interior settlements, such as that at Springfield, were counted secure.

We turn, therefore, to the Floyd Fork farm of Abraham Lincoln with rather strong antecedent probability that this was the spot where the death of the pioneer Lincoln occurred.

If the Jefferson County records had not suffered serious loss by fire, and we could find among them just one mention of Abraham Lincoln as a taxpayer, or a juror, or a collector of bounties on wolf scalps, or the taker-up of an estray horse or cow,

that single record, with the presumption already established, would be almost conclusive evidence in favor of the Floyd's Fork farm. Unfortunately no such evidence is available, and we must gather what we may from other sources.

On the same day that Abraham Lincoln's four hundred acre tract was surveyed, the same surveyors located a tract immediately adjacent to it upon the north in the name of Morgan Hughes. Upon this patent stood Hughes' Station, a plat of which, in the George Rogers Clark papers, now forms a portion of the Durrett collection. That plat bears the penciled note of Colonel R. T. Durrett, stating that Bland W. Ballard said that this was a weak fort, badly built, and that the Indians killed a man near it in 1786.

Colonel Durrett's note is as follows:

"Bland W. Ballard states that the station was erected by Morgan Hughes in 1780; that it stood on Long Run in Jefferson County not far from the Baptist meeting house; that it consisted of eight cabins and four block houses at the corners and that it was a weak fort, poorly built. In 1786 a man was killed here by an Indian while he was coming to the station from his land near by on Long Run, where he had been putting in a crop. His family resided in the station and soon after his death the widow and children moved into Nelson County."

I have endeavored without avail to learn where and to whom Bland W. Ballard made this statement. I have not found it either in the Durrett collection or in the Draper manuscripts, though it may be in either one of them. But we may trust Colonel Durrett as to the general correctness of this affirmation. Major Bland W. Ballard was born in Virginia, October 16, 1761, and died September 5, 1853, before the Lincoln name became famous. Apparently he did not name the man who was killed, not thinking that matter of any consequence. This testimony, therefore, from a man of Major Ballard's standing, who was in position to know, is of very great importance.

But Colonel Durrett lived to be very greatly interested in Lincoln; and he added a further note of his own, and afterward erased it. It began with the word "Query" or "Question," and enough can still be deciphered to make it evident that Colonel Durrett raised the question whether this man killed by the Indians in 1786 was not the ancestor of President Lincoln. But Colonel Durrett himself erased his own question, or at least the question was erased before the plan came into the possession of the University of Chicago, and it is hardly conceivable that any one else

than Colonel Durrett should have done it. Why did he make this erasure? Apparently because he satisfied himself that 1786 could not have been the date of the Lincoln murder.

Now, inasmuch as Major Ballard knew nothing about Lincoln, and Colonel Durrett believed that the grandfather of Abraham Lincoln was killed two years earlier, this note has great evidential value. It was not made with attempt to prove anything. But we have excellent reasons to believe that this man was none other than the older Abraham Lincoln, and that the date 1786 is correct.

It is evident that Colonel Durrett did not juggle Major Ballard's figures; if he was tempted to change the date from 1786 to 1784 to fit his own theory, he did not do so, but erased his own query instead.

Now, if we could be sure that Abraham Lincoln was killed, not in 1782 or 1784 (and both dates are impossible in view of his presence at the survey May 7, 1785) but in 1786, we should feel sure that his death occurred on Long Run. The circumstances related by Major Ballard as to the killing itself and the removal of the widow and children to Nelson County (for Washington then was a part of Nelson) are in full accord with the family tradition. If on any other ground we can confirm the date, the testimony of Major Ballard will settle the question of the place.

Fortunately, we are not left in doubt on this point.

Rev. Louis A. Warren, in an entirely independent investigation, has found an affidavit of Mordecai Lincoln, made in 1816, in which he, the eldest son and heir at law of the pioneer, and a witness of his father's death, stated that Abraham Lincoln was killed in May, 1786. The sworn testimony of Mordecai Lincoln and the testimony of Bland W. Ballard are wholly independent, for Bland W. Ballard of course had no interest in ascertaining, the name of the man killed. Mordecai's affidavit confirms Ballard's testimony as to the date, and Ballard's is practically conclusive as to the place.

On March 10, 1922, accompanied by Mr. R. C. Ballard Thruston, Vice-President of the Filson Club, and Mr. Hardin Helm Herr, son of Catherine Todd Herr, and nephew of Mary Todd Lincoln, I visited the site of the Lincoln farm on Long Run, which is a branch of Floyd's Fork. This visit was made the more fruitful by surveys, plats, abstracts and other documents prepared in advance by Mr. Thruston.

Interesting correspondence followed this visit, and I went

again on Monday, June 12, 1922, accompanied by Mr. Thruston, Rev. Louis A. Warren, Mr. T. C. Fisher, a law student, and native of the region we were to visit, and Miss Kinkead, Mr. Thruston's secretary, who took down in shorthand several of our interviews.

On these two occasions we positively identified the Lincoln farm. The courses of the streams, an abandoned mill race, and other topographical features established this beyond doubt.

Putting together our documentary proof and what appeared reliable tradition, going back through the oldest men now living in the vicinity to settlers two generations earlier, we were able to identify with a strong degree of probability the site of Hughes Station and the home site of the Lincoln family. We were guided to the latter by two men, long resident in the vicinity, who found the spot in a plowed field and who assured us that the spring, which had belonged to the house, was at a point which they were able to identify near at hand. On the exact spot where they said a house had been, we found indubitable evidence of human habitation, in broken crockery and other cast off reminders of occupancy. We found the spring, also, exactly where they unearthed it, and though its retaining walls had fallen in, we were able to remove stones enough to be certain that the water still would flow if it were given opportunity.

The location of the Lincoln house in its relation to the Morgan Hughes fort we found to be such as to satisfy every requirement of the tradition.

Although we still greatly desire some actual record of the residence of Abraham Lincoln in Jefferson County, we have quite a body of evidence that indicates that the pioneer Abraham Lincoln met his death on Long Run, in Jefferson County, very near to the edge of Shelby.

This was as much as we had expected to learn, and quite all that we could have anticipated; but we were surprised to find a local tradition concerning the grave of the pioneer Abraham Lincoln. This tradition affirmed that the Long Run Baptist Church, which stands on the Lincoln farm and is surrounded by graves, some of them very old, has within its yard and perhaps under the very building as it now stands, the grave of Abraham Lincoln. This tradition came down to us through S. M. Talbott and Oscar T. Proctor. Mr. Talbott is 75 years of age and conveyed to us the testimony of William Webb, who was born on Long Run in 1797 and who returned to visit the place of his birth about 1880,

and at that time told to Mr. Talbott much which he had learned from his father, the older William Webb.

The original Long Run Church building was of logs, and erected in about 1797 on land that had belonged to Abraham Lincoln. But according to Mr. Talbott, it was the common burying place of the neighborhood before there was a building there. The first settlers did not bury their dead on individual farms, for they had their community life in Hughes Station. The oldest graves, therefore, were in this place.

The log church building was succeeded by a house erected out of local stone. The stone was used in the foundations of the brick church.

The first brick church, which superseded the stone church, was erected in 1833. It was subsequently enlarged. Its present outside dimensions are about 41 x 62 feet. It appears to be 18½ feet wider and about as much longer than the original building. These old residents united in their declaration that the oldest traditions of the community were that Abraham Lincoln and four or five others were buried so close to the spot where the log church was erected in 1797, that when the brick church was extended their graves were covered by the extension.

By permission of the trustees, a portion of the floor of the church was removed for us, and Mr. Fisher put on overalls and descended with a flashlight, hoping to discover some traces of graves. In this he was unsuccessful. If graves had ever been there, the extensions of the building, and the changes in the floor level had obliterated all sign of them. The space was cramped, and no digging was practicable. We, therefore, are not able to present a demonstration of the presence of graves under the church, nor if we could find them there could we assert positively that one of them was the grave of Abraham Lincoln. I can think of no likelihood that any more certain evidence on this point will come to us; and I therefore submit that in the light of our best knowledge Abraham Lincoln was killed on Floyd's Fork in May of 1786, and probably buried upon his own farm, and that it is rather more than possible that the site of his grave is within the churchyard of the Long Run Baptist Church, and possibly under the building.

Many historic graves have been identified and monuments erected on evidence less convincing. The testimony is really as

direct and consistent as we could expect to find, and much more so than we did expect when our quest began.

This, then, is as far as our present knowledge permits us to go in determining the location of the original home of the Lincoln family in Kentucky. Unless future search or good fortune shall disclose some document whose existence is not now known, this is probably as far as any investigation can ever lead.

Thus do we bring to an end our quest of the original Kentucky home of the progenitors of Abraham Lincoln.

II. THE WASHINGTON COUNTY HOME.

The next Kentucky home of the Lincoln family is in Washington County. Just how early the Lincoln family made its home there, the records do not at present permit us to declare. Probably they were there before the administration of the estate, October 14, 1788. In the earliest tax list of Washington County thus far discovered, and that only last summer in a pile of old records at Frankfort, we find Mordecai Lincoln, a white male, over 21, and Bathsheba Lincoln with one white male between 16 and 21, who must have been Josiah. This is for the year 1792, and the date of the assessment is October 10. Apparently Bathsheba lived in the same house with her sons. Thomas as yet was not 16, and there is therefore no record of him in that list, though it appears later. Mordecai had one horse and his mother had one horse and ten head of cattle.

This discovery, for which Mrs. Cannon of the Kentucky State Historical Society, deserves thanks, is of immense importance. It has been believed on the testimony chiefly of Mr. Nall and Mrs. Vawter, that Abraham Lincoln was married to Mary Shipley. When in 1909 Lea and Hutchinson, partially atoning for their many and unpardonable blunders, discovered that in the two deeds by which Abraham Lincoln disposed of his Virginia property, his wife was Bathsheba*; it was assumed that Mary Shipley Lincoln had died and that Bathsheba was the second wife, the mother of Thomas, while Mary was the mother of the older sons. This position encountered still further difficulty in the testimony of Mr. Nall, who thought that the widow of Abraham Lincoln was

*I am permitting this statement to stand, in order that I may find some good word to say for that beautiful and deceptive book, Lea and Hutchinson, on "The Ancestry of Abraham Lincoln." I really do not think they deserve as much credit as I am giving them. In the same year in which they published this correction, the information was printed by Marion Dexter Learned in "Abraham Lincoln: An American Migration." The man who really deserves the credit, as I suppose, is John T. Harris, Jr., of Harrisburg, Va., who, in March, 1887, twenty-two years before Lea and Hutchinson's publication, published the fact in The Century Magazine.

named Mary, and that she survived her husband long and died at a great age in Hardin County and was buried in the Mill Creek cemetery. Thus the two wives were reversed, and it came to be believed that Abraham Lincoln's first wife was Bathsheba, the mother of all his children, and that very promptly after her death he married Mary Shipley.

We know that there never was a Mary Shipley Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln was married but once and his wife was Bathsheba. Rev. Louis A. Warren has discovered later records showing her residence of Washington County, years after the death of her husband. Whether she later removed to Hardin County and lived with her daughter, Nancy, and was buried at Mill Creek cemetery, is not yet fully determined. But in 1792 there resided in Washington County, Bathsheba, widow of Abraham Lincoln, with her son Mordecai, who was past 21, her son Josiah, who was over 16, her son Thomas, who was under 16, and her two daughters.

Mordecai married in 1792, Mary, the daughter of Luke Mudd. Mary was a Roman Catholic and they were married by priest William de Rohan. The descendants of this branch of the Lincoln family, now living largely in Hancock County, Illinois, are generally Roman Catholics to this day. Josiah married Catherine Barlow, February 21, 1801, and on October 3, 1810, his wife Catherine joined him in a deed of 107½ acres of land in Washington County. "Caty" Barlow was a daughter of Christopher Barlow.

In Washington County, too, lived the cousin of these Lincolns, Hannaniah. He had 1000 acres of land on the East side of Beech Fork, which he entered as the assignee of James Thompson, "for duty." Thompson was a Revolutionary soldier. This warrant was numbered 10770 and the date of Hannaniah's patent is February 3, 1783. Hannaniah married, February 9, 1787, Sarah Jeffrey. The officiating clergyman was William Taylor, a Baptist. Sarah Jeffrey was probably the daughter of Moses Jeffries, the spelling of the names not being uniform.

Mention has been made of the Washington County tax list for 1792, containing the names of Bathsheba and Mordecai, and showing also a younger brother, above sixteen, who must have been Josiah.

The next tax list for Washington County discovered is of the year 1795, and this also at Frankfort. The name of Bathsheba is

not contained in it, though we have reason to believe she still was living there. For some reason also Josiah was not listed. Mordecai, however, is there with his 100 acres of land, 4 horses and 10 cattle. For the first time the name of Thomas Lincoln appears as a white male between 16 and 21.

The name of Thomas Lincoln appears in six tax lists in Washington County. On May 11, 1796, occurs the second mention of his name, the first being that already noted in the list at Frankfort, in 1795. In this list of 1796 he appears again as a white male above 16 and under 21. The 1797 list contains the names of Mordecai and Josiah, but for some reason that of Thomas is omitted. The 1798 list has not been found. Quite possibly it was at this time Thomas Lincoln was working for his uncle, Isaac, in East Tennessee. In 1799 he is listed as in Washington County, as of age, but as owning no property. In 1800 he is shown in a list at Springfield as of February 14, a white male above 21, owning one horse. This list may be for 1799, for at Frankfort, there is a list for 1800. Mordecai and Thomas were listed on July 14 and Josiah on May 10. In the later years, the land holdings of Mordecai Lincoln show large increase. There had been litigation and some of the land belonging to the estate of Abraham Lincoln had not been reported for taxation. Into the merits of that question we have no occasion to go. In 1810, Mordecai Lincoln had two tracts of land in Washington County, one of 300 acres and one of 130, besides 1950 in Madison County and 1134 in Hardin.

Thomas Lincoln was listed in Washington County, August 5, 1801. He was listed again in the same county on September 6, 1805. This 1805 record is defective, and was for a time believed to belong to the year 1811, but that is a mistake. Between these two years, Thomas Lincoln was in Hardin County. He bought a farm there. This was his Mill Creek farm, and his title bears date of September 2, 1803. He returned to Washington County, however, in 1805, and was a resident there at the time of his marriage to Nancy Hanks.

The Lincoln farm in Washington County has been identified, and I have visited it. The home site occupies a triangular elevation bounded by the road and the forks of Lincoln's Run. It is located at the intersection of the Springfield and Frankfort Pike with the Litsey and Valley Hill Pike at a point where a small branch or brook runs from the Springfield and

Frankfort Pike into the Lincoln Run. I have tried to find some evidence of the site of the house, but have not found anything which certainly indicates human habitation. Here, however, as we are reasonably assured, the widow of Abraham Lincoln brought her family, and here her sons grew to manhood and her daughters to womanhood. Thomas, the youngest son, became the "wandering laboring boy," whom Abraham, his son describes, and was absent at least one year in Tennessee working for his Uncle Isaac Lincoln, but to this home he returned from time to time and this, except for the period 1803-1805, when he was in Hardin County, was his residence until a few months prior to the time of his marriage to Nancy Hanks, June 12, 1806.

The Rev. Jesse Head, who married this couple was a neighbor. Rather near neighbors also were Richard and Francis Berry. The pioneer Richard Berry was dead. His will, dated August 19, 1797, was proved December 4, 1798. His wife was not Lucy, but Rachel. His son, Richard Berry, who assumed by courtesy a guardianship of Nancy Hanks and became Thomas Lincoln's surety on the marriage bond had been married October 22, 1794, to Polly Ewing, called in the record Cally Ewing, of Mercer County. There was a third Richard Berry, whose wife Margaret joined him in a deed of October 26, 1819. Nancy Hanks appears to have been related to the Berry family, though what the relationship was is not known. Her mother certainly was not a sister of the elder Mrs. Richard Berry. From Richard Berry's use of the term "guardian" it has been assumed that she had been adopted by the Berrys, but of this there is no proof.

The house in which the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks occurred is believed to have been that of Richard Berry. The reason for this opinion is Richard's signing of the marriage bond as quasi guardian of Nancy. It is to be remembered, however, that the earliest form in which the story of the marriage in Washington County, occurred in print, the letter of Mrs. C. S. H. Vawter in the Louisville Courier of April 18, 1874, stated that the marriage occurred in the house of Francis Berry. The Francis Berry house is still standing on the farm of Mr. Polin, and I have visited it. On his farm also is the Old Berry cemetery, where all the Berrys and their relatives of the early generations are supposed to be buried.

The house of Richard Berry, located upon the public road, and having an excellent limestone spring at which Thomas Lincoln

and Nancy Hanks must have quenched their thirst, was taken down some years ago, and the logs were taken to Harrodsburg, where through the enterprise of Mr. W. W. Stephenson and others they are reerected in the Lincoln cabin, close by the site of Harrodsburg's old fort.

Before we leave Washington County it may be well to remind ourselves that the people of that county are strongly insistent that Abraham Lincoln was born and spent his early childhood there. The evidence in favor of his birth in that county is not convincing. At one time I was inclined to credit the report that he spent a portion of his boyhood there. I found some reason to believe that Thomas Lincoln after leaving Nolin Creek farm and before taking up residence on the Knob Creek farm moved back for the year 1811 to Washington County; but this I have since discovered was not the case.

Mordecai Lincoln in time removed to Illinois, where he has descendants now living. Josiah Lincoln removed to Indiana. The youngest of the three sons, Thomas, on his marriage to Nancy Hanks, removed to Hardin County, where already he had interests. From this time forth he only, among the three sons of Abraham, will engage our attention.

But before we take leave of the collateral branches of the Lincoln household, we may remind ourselves that a brother of Abraham Lincoln, by the name of Thomas, had followed him to Kentucky and taken up his residence in Fayette County. He purchased 290 acres of land in Fayette County, on the waters of Shannon's Run of South Elkhorn, about five miles from Lexington. The deed is recorded by Levi Todd, clerk of Court, and grandfather of Mary Todd Lincoln. This farm is on the Harrodsburg Pike. Shannon's Run crosses this Pike and divides Fayette from Woodford County. I have visited this farm under the guidance of Hon. William H. Townsend, who is the discoverer of the documents regarding this branch of the family.

This Thomas Lincoln, brother of the pioneer Abraham, was a prosperous man, with a wife, Elizabeth, and eight children, Margaret, Catherine, Abraham, George, John, David, Hannah and Elizabeth. He cultivated year by year an increased acreage, and owned a number of slaves. Unfortunately, he had a distillery on his farm, and both he and his wife patronized the still. The story which the court records discloses is a sad one of domes-

tic discord and of financial ruin. Thomas Lincoln lost his slaves, his lands, his cattle, and on July 3, 1815, the sheriff sold his life estate in the last acre of his farm, there being no personal property out of which judgment for debt could be satisfied. A court order dated Dec. 11, 1820, refers to him as "Thomas Lincoln, deceased." That is probably the year of his death. His son Abraham removed to Tennessee, and the male line of this family disappeared from Kentucky.

III. THE MILL CREEK FARM.

The first land which Thomas Lincoln owned was an improved farm of 238 acres, which he purchased from Dr. John Toms Slater, September 2, 1803. The deed acknowledged the cash payment of 118 pounds. Where Thomas Lincoln obtained this amount of money is not known. My own conjecture is that his eldest brother, Mordecai, being the sole heir at law of his father, Abraham Lincoln, under the old English law of primogeniture, accepted his responsibility for himself and in trust for his brothers; and that soon after Thomas Lincoln came of age an equitable settlement was made and Thomas received his share in cash.

In my "Paternity of Abraham Lincoln," I expressed the opinion that the 118 pounds which Thomas Lincoln paid in cash for his improved Mill Creek farm had come to him from the settlement of his father's estate. This opinion now finds reinforcement in the discovery, for which I have to thank Mrs. Cannon of the Kentucky State Historical Society, that Mordecai, in 1803, the year of this purchase, was selling off his father's land outside Washington County. In 1797 he had sold to Benjamin Bridges the Long Run farm, and it is reasonable to believe that Josiah received his portion out of this sale. Josiah's name appears in the tax list of that year as an adult. What Mrs. Cannon now discovers is that Abraham Lincoln's eight hundred acres of land on Green River was sold by Mordecai Lincoln in the very year, 1803, in which Thomas Lincoln bought his Mill Creek farm. This is the identical land located on Treasury Warrants 3333 and 3335. The deed is recorded in Lincoln County Deeds, Book E, page 130. The consideration was 400 pounds. It is true that the date of this deed, December 24, 1803, is three months later than that of John Toms Slater to Thomas Lincoln, which was September 2, 1803; but the formal deed often followed the purchase after intervals of months or even years. Thus, the deed of Mordecai

Lincoln to Benjamin Bridges, conveying the Long Run farm, was dated April 2, 1822, a full quarter century after the actual sale, which was by bond and delivery of the land, January 12, 1797. (Jefferson County Deeds, Book U, page 251.)

The Mill Creek farm is confused by every author who takes account of it. The first identification of the farm as distinct from Thomas Lincoln's other holdings in Hardin County, was in my my own book, "The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln." On June 16, 1921, Rev. Louis A. Warren and I made an approach to an identification of the actual farm. We took with us W. G. Morgan, a surveyor of long-time experience, and went north from Elizabethtown on the Shepherdsville road, a distance of about nine miles, where we made what we thought was an identification. The site of the old house, known as the Milton house, is back in the field a half mile west of the Shepherdsville road. Mr. Warren made later investigations which convinced him that the farm lay somewhat farther eastward from the road. There was no doubt however, about its general location, nor about the incorrectness of previous writers, some of whom confused it with the Nolin Creek farm, and some with the Knob Creek farm.

This land was deeded by Thomas and Nancy Lincoln to Charles Milton, October 27, 1814. It was sold as a farm of 200 acres. Mr. Warren has discovered the reason for the discrepancy between the 238 purchased and the 200 acres sold. The reason was a wrong reading of the surveyor's direction. Thomas Lincoln signed his name and Nancy made her mark.

IV. THE HOME IN ELIZABETHTOWN.

The Mill Creek farm was reasonably fertile. Had Thomas Lincoln been a good farmer he might well have kept it and there reared his family. But he had left the farm before his marriage, and was living in Elizabethtown, working at the carpenter's trade. In the latter part of 1805 and the first half of 1806, he was in Washington County. He was in Hardin as late as March of 1805 and was taxed in Washington on September 6, of the same year. Soon after his marriage to Nancy Hanks, Thomas returned with his bride to Elizabethtown, and there they made their first home. The house in which they lived was still standing in 1866. Lamon, writing in 1870, thus described it:

"Lincoln took Nancy to live in a shed on one of the alleys of Elizabethtown. It was a very sorry building, and nearly bare of furniture. It stands

yet, or did stand in 1866, to witness for itself the wretched poverty of its early inmates. It is about fourteen feet square, has been three times removed, twice used as a slaughter house, and once as a stable. Here a daughter was born on the 10th of February, 1807, who was called Nancy during the life of her mother, and after her death, Sarah" (pp. 12, 13).

Lamon is wrong about the girl's name. There is no evidence that she was called anything else than Sarah. He may also be wrong about the building itself being a witness to the dire poverty of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln. A building that has been several times removed and rebuilt and put to various commonplace uses, may bear very little resemblance of its original self. It was a rough and bare log cabin, but probably not much better nor worse than the average single-room cabin of its day. There is general agreement in Elizabethtown concerning the street on which it stood, but a difference of opinion as to its exact location.

V. THE HOME IN THE PLUM ORCHARD.

When the attorneys for the Lincoln Farm Association made their investigation, which assured the purchasers of the genuineness of that farm, they came upon what they regarded as conclusive evidence that when Thomas and Nancy Lincoln first removed from Elizabethtown to what is now Larue County, they lived for some months upon the farm of George Brownfield, about two and a half miles from the Lincoln farm and five miles south of Hodgenville. The spot on the Brownfield farm where the Lincoln cabin stood, is known as the Plum Orchard. It was a natural growth of wild crabapples, and was identified for me by Hon. Richard Creal, County Judge of Larue County, whose family owned the Lincoln farm. Through the courtesy of Mr. Warren I have a number of photographs of the site of the Plum Orchard.

It was while they were living here, in the spring or early summer of the year 1808, that Nancy Hanks Lincoln first experienced a premonition of motherhood, which resulted in the following February of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. If Hon. L. B. Handley, attorney for the Lincoln Farm Association, is correct in his conclusion that Thomas Lincoln and his wife lived in this place at this period, it is a spot which has for lovers of Lincoln a very real sentimental interest. Here in a rather picturesque locality, amid the odor of the wild-apple blossoms the unborn life of Abraham Lincoln began.

VI. THE ROCK SPRING FARM.

Sometime in the autumn of the year 1808, Thomas and Nancy

Lincoln and their little girl, Sarah, moved to a cabin near the Rock Spring, on what now is known as the Lincoln farm. It is located on Nolin Creek, two and a half miles south of the present site of Hodgenville. There was, however, no village at Hodgenville when the Lincolns lived there. The country was sparsely settled. The Lincolns had as neighbors however, Thomas and Elizabeth Sparrow, who were Nancy Lincoln's foster-parents, and Jesse Friend and his wife, Polly, Mrs. Friend being the aunt of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. The stories that have grown up about the destitution of the Lincoln family in this period rest on no basis of fact. Nancy Lincoln had near at hand, when her baby came, a number of relatives, including two aunts, one of whom she regarded as a mother. Thomas Lincoln had been successful in a series of law suits which came for their final hearing a few days after the birth of Abraham, and on March 17, 1809, Thomas was completely successful, and must have been for him in fairly prosperous circumstances. Record of auction sales in the neighborhood find Thomas Lincoln present, purchasing livestock and simple household comforts, which he paid for in cash. There is documentary proof, too, as Mr. Warren has discovered, that when Nancy needed a doctor she had one, and that Thomas Lincoln paid the bills.

The Rock Spring farm was, however, a sterile farm, and Thomas Lincoln did not live on Nolin Creek more than two years.

The Rock Spring farm, where now the beautiful memorial is erected, above a log cabin supposed to have been that in which Abraham Lincoln was born, is now the property of the government and has become a national shrine.

VII. THE KNOB CREEK FARM.

In the spring of 1811, Thomas Lincoln is found in his new home on Knob Creek. Most lives of Lincoln declare that Abraham lived in the house in which he was born until he was four years old. My own investigations convinced me that this period was twice too long, and Mr. Warren subsequently discovered documentary proof that the Lincoln family were on Knob Creek certainly by May 11, 1811, and probably some months earlier. This was the only Kentucky home that Abraham Lincoln remembered. Here he lived from the time he was two years old until he was seven. Here he attended school and found his first playmates.

The Knob Creek farm remained unexplored and unvisited by writers on Lincoln until my own investigation began. I was able to find members of the Rapier family who had been born upon the farm and who remembered the Lincoln cabin. It stood on the opposite side of the road from the Rapier house, which is still standing, and was in the fork of Knob Creek. I visited the farm in company with Mr. Warren and we compared his notes and my own, with the result that we made what we regard as for all practical purposes a positive identification of the site of the Lincoln cabin.

I need not repeat in this place what I have told at length in my book, "The Paternity of Abraham Lincoln," concerning the ejectment suit against Thomas Lincoln. Lincoln was successful in this suit, but it caused him great annoyance, and one of the reasons which he gave to his son Abraham for leaving Kentucky was the insecurity of land titles.

For the papers concerning this suit, I am indebted to Hon. George Holbert of Elizabethtown; and Mr. Warren has since discovered others of importance bearing upon the same litigation. I am hoping that Mr. Warren will publish in full the results of his own investigations in the history of the Lincoln family in Kentucky.

Writers on Abraham Lincoln have entirely missed the significance of the removal of the Lincoln family from the Nolin Creek farm to the Knob Creek farm. A removal from one not very fertile farm to another within the same county has not seemed a matter of any very great significance. It was, however, an event of importance.

First: It took the Lincoln family out of the backwoods* and gave them a home fronting upon the main thoroughfare from Louisville to Nashville. Over one section of this road Thomas Lincoln became overseer. It was perhaps his one public office. It was not a very conspicuous one, but still it was not lacking in importance. Having traveled this road, I am convinced that Thomas Lincoln earned every cent that can ever have been paid him for whatever labor he expended upon it.

The Lincoln farm had three little fields in the forked valley of Knob Creek. A sudden rise of the stream would sometimes flood the valley and wash away the crop. Excepting for this disadvan-

*The Lincoln birthplace, however, was not so isolated as has often been supposed. The "Old Cumberland road" probably passed both it and the Knob Creek farm.

tage, the farm was more fertile than that on Nolin Creek, and it was very much more accessible to the outside world.

A second interesting fact about the Knob Creek farm is that the region cannot have been a strange one to Nancy Hanks. The farm of her grandfather, Joseph Hanks, who died in 1793, was located in this general region. Some members of the Hanks family were probably still living in that general section; though Nancy's uncle, the younger Joseph Hanks, to whom the farm was left by her grandfather, had returned to Virginia, and then come back to Kentucky, and was working as a carpenter in Elizabethtown. It is said to have been from him that Thomas Lincoln learned his trade.

A third consideration regarding the Knob Creek farm is that in going there Thomas Lincoln established a new neighborhood relationship. Eleven miles through the woods was not a short journey in those days, but it led over Muldraugh's hill. This is more than a hill; it is an escarpment facing the Blue Grass region. It extends from the vicinity of West Point in the southwest corner of Jefferson County, eastward to the vicinity of Brodhead, Rockcastle County, thence northeastward to the Ohio River west of Vanceburg, Lewis County. It separates the fertile Blue Grass region from the broken and less fertile uplands where the Lincolns had previously lived. Their new outlook was toward the Blue Grass region. They were less than two miles up Knob Creek from Rolling Fork. There the Blue Grass region began.

This furnished to Thomas Lincoln and his family a very different outlook upon the world than would have been theirs had they remained on Nolin Creek. If Thomas Lincoln had built his flatboat on Nolin Creek near the site of the Lincoln cabin, he would have floated 256 miles down Nolin Creek and Green River to reach the Ohio, and would have landed 46 miles below the point where he made his Indiana home. From Knob Creek, however, to the Ohio River, the flat-boat moved down Rolling Fork and Salt River, a distance of only 42 miles to the Ohio. By the Ohio River it was about 91 miles thence to his landing in Indiana. If Thomas Lincoln had not removed from Nolin Creek to Knob Creek, it is wholly unlikely that he would have made his home where he did in Indiana. He would have more likely gone on past the settlements at the mouths of the Wabash, Cumberland and Tennessee, and made his home in Missouri. The young Abraham Lincoln in that event would have lacked his training in Indiana and Illinois,

and his career would have been greatly modified by his environment.

These seven home sites gave to Kentucky a large and legitimate interest in the life-story of the Lincolns. The narrative of the discovery of these places cannot fail to be of interest and it is of permanent value.

"Seven cities strove for Homer, dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread."

Seven different localities in Kentucky are entitled to honorable pride in their share in the short and simple annals of this migratory household.

In the location and authentication of these sites I have had the assistance of many people, particularly of those whom I have named, though the acknowledgment by no means exhausts the list. So far as I am aware no one hither has undertaken with any degree of thoroughness to visit and identify these sites, and the errors of my predecessors in this field have been many.

It is perhaps only fair to add that when this investigation began, partly with my own labor and partly with those who generously assisted me, only one of these seven sites had been certainly identified; that one, of course, was the Lincoln birth-place at the Rock Creek Farm on Nolin Creek. Some of the other six had only a conjectural identification and the others were wholly undiscovered. This paper therefore may modestly claim to be an addition to historical knowledge regarding the homes of the Lincoln family.

Thus we bring to an end the list of Kentucky homes known or with strong reason believed to have been occupied by the ancestors of Abraham Lincoln. It was an age of migration, and the Lincoln family like many others moved on, and found places of abode in states still nearer the outer rim of civilization. But the ties which bind Lincoln to Kentucky are many. Although Indiana and Illinois have their just and large share in the life of Abraham Lincoln, still, of this family it may be truly said that Kentucky has its own legitimate and special interest in its development. It is the state that gave Lincoln birth, and furnished seven places of abode to his parents. The sun shines bright on their old Kentucky home.

